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FATHER WARD'S LETTER TO PROFESSOR STUART.

The following letter was written to Professor Stuart, on his letter to Dr. Fisk, in which he teaches, that the *Bible* sanctions slavery, and which he allowed him to publish, if he "thought it would be of any service." It was written without the least idea of ever having it published. But some worthy and devoted ministers, who have seen it, expressed a wish that it might be given to the public.

Some may think it severe. I am totally opposed to all harshness and undue severity. But the honor of God and of the Bible, is infinitely more important than the honor of any man. And when men of high standing in the church, and extensive influence, attempt to support from the Bible a system of flagrant injustice and wickedness, it seems to be proper to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and *commandments of men*, that turn from the truth." There is at this day a sad giving "heed to the commandments of men" which support slavery, and which leads many professors and ministers to regard the laws of man as more binding than the laws of God, and to support a system whose laws forbid men to learn, or to be taught, to read *God's laws*, and his blessed word.

REVEREND SIR,

It is with reluctance that I take my pen to address you. And perhaps you may think it unbecoming in an obscure minister to address one so high in official standing, and especially to call in question his expositions of the sacred oracles, and his assumed positions. But when a person promulgates sentiments, and gives them to the public, they are public property, and every one has a right to animadvert upon them.

I recently met with your letter to Dr. Fisk, in which you make the Bible, and the God of the Bible, sanction the awful sin of Slavery, and which I read with surprise and grief. And as I am fully persuaded you have greatly "reproached your Maker," I feel constrained to "speak on God's behalf," and vindicate his glorious name and blessed book from the foul reproach of sanctioning that system, which withholds the Bible from immortal beings, and degrades them to the condition of beasts of burden, and mere property. For your letter will be quoted by slave-holders, and the supporters of slavery, as authority to prove, that the Bible, which condemns all kinds of injustice and oppression, does nevertheless sanction American Slavery with all its abominations. And of what "service" did you think its publication would be, except to serve the cause of slavery? Could you think it would be "doing *God* service?" If any have in a very small degree that spirit which led Elijah to say, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts," it seems as though they must be deeply affected to see Ministers and Theological Professors, bringing his sacred good old book to authorize the making "merchandize of the souls of men," and that they must feel something of the indignation which Christ expressed, when the ancient ministers of the sanctuary "made his house a house of merchandize." But which is the worst, to make the material temple "a house of merchandize," by selling sacrifices in it, or to make mer-

But you admit that "the theory of slavery is not in itself right," and is contrary to the commands, Matt. 22: 39, and 7: 12, and yet say it is not *malum in se*, (an evil in itself.) Do you mean that it is not *morally right*, nor *morally wrong*? But "the *abuse* of it," you say, "is the essential and fundamental wrong." This has always been the plea of rum-makers, rum-venders, and rum-drinkers, and their apologists, the opposers of thorough temperance movements. But I should like to know what that slavery is, the *abuse* of which only is a sin. And what is that christianity which will destroy what it sanctions? For you say, "Paul knew well that christianity would ultimately destroy slavery." It is according to modern divines and theological professors, supported by the example of patriarchs and primitive christians, and the authority of Christ and his apostles, and of God himself, and yet christianity will destroy it! Christianity must certainly have a wonderful power to *destroy* what is *supported* by its own authority. Perhaps you will allege, that it only sanctions *slavery*, but not the *abuse* of it. You however say it will destroy slavery itself. And therefore it will *destroy* what it *sanctions and supports*. And you say "slaves were property in Greece and Rome. The power of the master over the slave was, for a long time, that of *life and death*. Horrible cruelties at length mitigated it. In the Apostle's day, it was at least, as great as among us." And yet this is the very slavery which you suppose the Apostle sanctioned! The holy Apostle and the Holy Ghost sanctioning a system of injustice and cruelty!

As well might you prove that he sanctioned Nero's tyranny and cruelty. "The manner in which the duty of servants or slaves is inculcated," says Dr. Wayland, "affords no ground for the assertion that it authorizes

one man to hold another in bondage, any more than the command to honor the king, when that king was Nero, authorized the tyranny of the emperor." But perhaps you agree with Dr. Fisk and his Methodist brethren in their "Counter Appeal," that 'Christianity sustained the fabric (of Nero's despotism'), 'it forbade the attempt at revolution.'

Does your letter however contain any *proof* to sustain your assertions? Or do they rest on mere assumptions? You take it for granted, that servants, 1 Tim. 6:1, must mean *slaves*. For, if Paul included *hired* servants, then your foundation entirely fails. And now what proof have you adduced, that he did not include them? None. And, to sustain yourself, you must prove, either that there were no *hired* servants, or else that *doulos* always means a *slave*; both of which may be abundantly *disproved*. Paul says, "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, (doulou,) though he be lord of all." You will not, I presume, contend that the child "though heir and lord of all, differeth nothing" from a *bond servant* or *slave*, and is held by his father as mere *property*. Paul calls himself the servant of Jesus Christ. Did he mean to teach that he was the *slave* of Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ was a *slave holder*? Those whom he "makes free are free indeed." Christians are called (douloi) servants of God, more than twenty times in the New Testament. And Paul styles himself and other ministers, the servants of christians. 1 Cor. 9:19. 2 Cor. 4:5. Did he mean their *slaves*? And he commanded them not to be the servants of men.—You will not surely say he meant *slaves*, as it would overthrow your scheme, because it would make him *forbid* them to be *slaves*. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, (doulos) *slave*!

But you will probably say, that *yoke* means the *yoke of slavery*. But how do you know? It does not mean so in any other place in the New Testament. And it would be rather singular logic to say, *therefore* it

must mean so here. "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy." This is a *voluntary* and *easy* service, '*taken*' *voluntarily*. The ritual service, which is called a yoke, was voluntary. Acts 15 : 10. Gal. 5 : 1. See 2 Cor. 6 : 14. Phil. 4 : 3. Though Paul has given directions to different members of families, as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants,—yet, according to your unreasonable supposition, there is one class, to wit, *hired* servants, whom he entirely overlooked. I would therefore read 1 Tim. 6 : 12. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke of voluntary or bond service, &c." "And those voluntary, or hired servants that have believing masters, &c." And this will entirely free the Apostle from the shocking imputation of sanctioning Grecian slavery, and the primitive christians from the charge of countenancing and supporting it, by their own example, and holding their fellow christians as *their property*.

You are very confident, that Onesimus was the *slave* of Philemon, and that "Paul sent him back" into perpetual slavery, to be held in bondage by a *Christian*, and as his *property*, in violation of the great law of love, as you seem to admit, in referring to that law ! But where is your *proof* ? As Onesimus seems to have run away in *debt*, it appears much more rational to suppose, that he was a hired servant, and that he had been paid in advance, or had borrowed money of Philemon. And in that case it would be highly proper for Paul to send him back. But he directed Philemon to "receive him *not* as a (common hired) servant, but *above* a servant," and to treat him as "a beloved (*christian*) brother." It is astonishing to me, that you should adduce this admirable letter to justify *Christian slave holding*. And no one, I think, would have done it, except to apologize for slave holding ministers and professors.

You seem to take it for granted, that we have in Paul's epistles, all the instructions, which he gave the churches on slavery ; that he did not condemn it, and

slavery both with the dictates of humanity and religion has been DEMONSTRATED, and is *generally seen and acknowledged*, to use their *honest, earnest and unwearied* endeavors, as speedily as possible to efface this *blot* on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world." "The *inconsistency* of slavery with *religion* has been demonstrated," contrary to the teachings of Paul, according to modern Theological Professors. The Synod of Kentucky, in their Address on slavery in 1835, written by President Young, after giving a description of slavery, say, "And can *any man* believe that such a thing is not sinful—that it is not hated by God—and not to be abhorred and abolished by men? a horrible system—such policy as the robber exhibits—a demoralizing and cruel system which it would be an insult to God to *imagine* that he does not abhor. The New Testament does condemn slaveholding, as practiced among us, in the most explicit terms, furnished by the language in which the inspired penman wrote. And that it is sinful is as certain, as that the light of God's truth has shone upon our world. Can any Christian contemplate without trembling his own agency in perpetuating such a system?" especially by writing in its defence?

Rev. Dr. Hill, in the synod of Virginia in 1835, said, "the relation of master and slave had its origin in *injustice and wrong*, and was *never* sanctioned in the *Bible*." Mr. Maxwell said in the same synod, "It is *preposterous* to go to the *Bible* to defend slavery. Its *universal spirit* is *against* the institution"—though Dr. Baxter, professor of Union Theological Seminary, "denied that the relation was unlawful, it was recognized by the Scripture. If it were not true, that the *Bible sanctions* the existing relations, then the abolitionists are right in their principle of *immediate* emancipation; for if there be sin in the relation, its *immediate* abandonment is a duty." Mr. Hodge, another

Theological Professor, says of slavery, "It is in vain to contend that it is *sin*, and yet profess reverence for the Scriptures; though he says, the general principles of the gospel have *destroyed* domestic slavery throughout the greater part of Christendom, and that the South has to choose between emancipation by the silent and holy influence of the gospel, or abide the issue of a long continued *conflict against* the laws of God"—a conflict against the laws of God, in maintaining what the word of God *sanctions*. Is not the Bible "divided against itself?" The Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, in 1834, in a Report on "the Religious Instruction of the colored population" of the South, says "In this Christian Republic, there are over two millions of human beings, in the condition of *Heathen*, and, in some respects, in a worse condition. From long continued and close observation, we believe that their moral and religious condition is such, that they may justly be considered the *Heathen* of this Christian country, and will bear comparison with Heathen in any country in the world."

Rev. J. R. Breckenridge in 1834, described the masters as having such power over the slaves, as to "deprive them of the entire earnings of their own labor, except only so much as is necessary to continue labor itself, by continuing healthful existence, thus committing *clear robbery*; to reduce them to the necessity of *universal concubinage*—and encouraging *universal prostitution*—abrogating the clearest laws of nature; thus *outraging* all *decency* and justice, and *degrading* thousands upon thousands of beings created like themselves in the image of the most high God." See the whole picture in the African Repository, Jan. 1834, p. 326. And yet this is the system which you have attempted to defend from the Bible. Perhaps you will say you did not mean to defend such slavery. But can you lay your hand on your heart, and say before God, that you did not design to defend *American*

slavery, but a slavery which now has no existence in the world?

Jefferson, speaking of slavery, said, "I tremble for my country, when I think that God is just, and that his justice will not always sleep."

How deeply affecting, that an *infidel* should thus express his fears that a just God would inflict heavy judgments upon this nation for upholding slavery, and that our Theological Professors, who are training the future ministers of the Church, are teaching them, that the blessed book of God sanctions such a system of injustice, oppression, pollution and heathenism.

I have not willingly written at such length, or with such freedom, or with any unkind feelings towards you, but, as I hope, from a concern for the glory of the ever blessed God, and the honor of the Bible. I feel that your letter is calculated to do immense injury, to discredit the Bible, and to make infidels,* and that you are "to be blamed" more than Peter was, when Paul "withstood him to the face," and reproved him "before all."

It is inconceivably dreadful to sin against, and dishonor the infinitely glorious God, and the gracious Savior of sinners. And it is strange, that *Christians* will do it. Yours, &c.

JONATHAN WARD.

BRENTWOOD, N. H., AUG. 1837.

*The Synod of Kentucky, in their report before referred to, say, "If any man can fairly show, that the Bible countenances such slavery as existed in the days of the Apostles, he would construct a more powerful argument against the divine origin of our religion, than infidelity has ever invented. A religion which sanctions a system of atrocious cruelty can never have come down from Heaven."

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